

Sustainability: Definitions and What It Takes

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2006 Summer ATR Grantee Conference
July 26-28, 2006

Our Definition of Sustainability

- Sustainability is the *process* of ensuring an adaptive system and a sustainable innovation that can be integrated into ongoing operations to benefit diverse stakeholders.
- Key sources of definition: literature, sustainability think tank, sustainability workgroup

What is to be sustained?

INNOVATION: That which is new to a system

Innovations may include:

- A new program or strategy that is effective
- A new infrastructure element that provides support for a program or strategy (e.g., an evaluation system, training curriculum, administrative policy, or expanded structure)

Goal One

Continue to build, support and strengthen infrastructure capacity of the organization or community to ensure an adaptive system that is receptive to change.

5 Capacities Critical to Sustaining an Innovation

- **Administrative structures and formal linkages**
- **Effective leaders and strong champions**
- **Financial, human, and technological resources**
- **Administrative policies and procedures**
- **Expertise and skills**

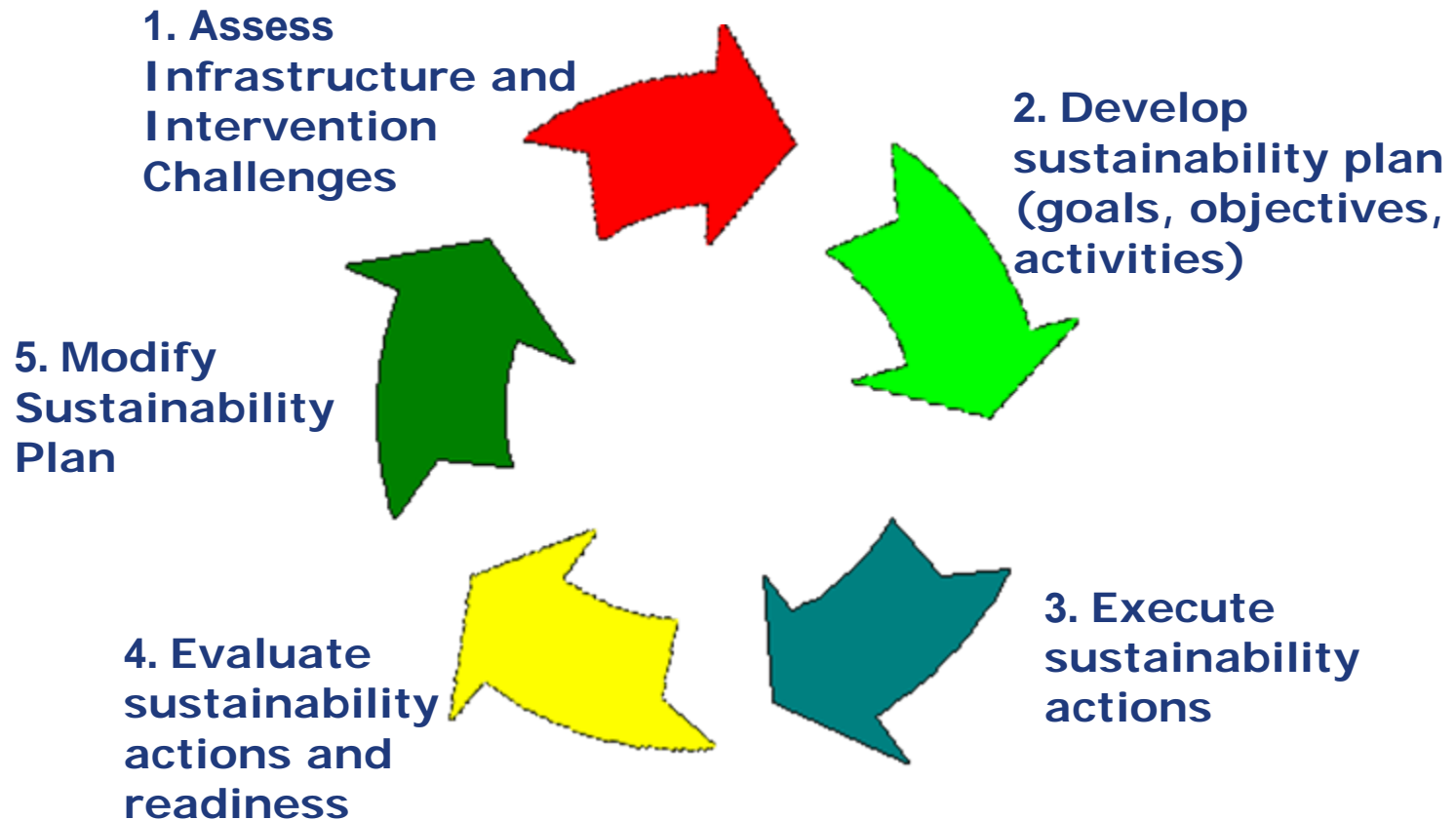
Goal Two

Assure that the innovation has specific attributes that continue to effectively address the needs of those with a stake in the ongoing use of the innovation

5 Innovation Characteristics Critical to Sustaining an Innovation

- Alignment with needs of innovation stakeholders
- Positive relationships among key implementers
- Successful implementation of the innovation
- Demonstrated effectiveness of the innovation
- Ownership of the innovation by key stakeholders

The Sustainability Action Steps



Steps for Sustainability Planning

1. Identify the innovation to be sustained
2. Assess capacity
3. Develop strategic sustainability plan to strengthen any of the factors found inadequate
4. Evaluate the implementation of sustainability plan
5. Modify plan if necessary to assure effectiveness

Applying Sustainability Thinking to ATR

- ATR programs need to have a sustainability strategy
- There are three major components to ATR:
 - Fiscal innovation
 - Service Innovation
 - Cultural/community innovation

Sustainability Focus

- Decision needed as to whether grantees want to sustain which or each of the three major components individually or all three as a whole
- If all three as a whole are selected, each component will need its own strategy and they may be different but will require coordination
- Focus needs to be well defined and planned

Precursors to and Complications with Sustainability Planning

- Need to identify and involve necessary leaders, partners and contacts for each program component to be sustained (priorities, timing and incentives may not be the same for all)
- Current operations need to be relatively stable in order to focus on right partnerships and actions
- Sustainability may be subject to evolution; need Plan B (and maybe C)
- Components to be sustained may also need to evolve

Who Decides?

- Sustainability leadership requires agreement not just on focus but on who makes critical decisions, who are the key stakeholders going forward, who should lead and why
- Establishing conflict resolution is essential to collaboration
- Sustainability needs concrete measurements that need to be identified ahead of time

Understanding and Making Sustainability Real

- Vision: How should this initiative look in 5 years?
- How have others sustained their innovations?
- Who can help us with sustainability, who will oppose it and how can that be managed
- What is the appropriate time frame for each component?
- What are the competing priorities to be managed?